

MEDIA RELEASE

Green Building Council releases revised Timber credit

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The Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) has announced the release of a revised Green Star Timber credit effective January 1, 2010, which allows for equal consideration of Australian forestry schemes.

The announcement, part of the ongoing Green Star Materials review, follows a detailed review of the GBCA's Timber credit, conducted by an independent Timber Expert Reference Panel.

With the revised Timber credit, all forestry schemes will need to satisfy five 'Essential' criteria to be eligible. This will provide one Green Star point to timber certified by any scheme which applies for and can meet these criteria.

A second point, for 'Significant' criteria, will only be available once the GBCA has undertaken a further round of stakeholder engagement with GBCA members and stakeholders including environmental groups, the timber industry and certification schemes.

Green Star projects already registered (Certification Agreement signed and fee paid before January 1, 2010) will EITHER be able to get one point for documenting that their timber is certified by a forestry scheme that has met the essential criteria such as FSC or AFS, once these schemes have been assessed against the first level of criteria, OR projects can continue to get two points in the traditional way for showing that their timber is certified by FSC if they have already specified FSC timber in their project OR if timber used in their project is re-used. New projects will only have the option of achieving one point for the time being.

The revised Timber credit has the support of the Federal Government, specifically The Hon Tony Burke MP, Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and moves away from the recognition of a single scheme to a principles-based approach where several schemes could be rewarded - as long as the essential criteria are met.

The GBCA supports an Australian forest industry which produces timber in a sustainable way and one of the aims of the GBCA's timber review was to 'shut the door' on the use of illegal or questionable imported timber in green buildings.

The GBCA is confident the revised Timber credit is fair and reasonable, with the essential criteria incorporating; the assessment of chain of custody; governance; standards development and revision; auditing and certification decisions; and verification of legality.

Stakeholders will also be asked for further comment on significant criteria for the Timber credit as the GBCA continues to evolve the credit and its tools in its drive for change and improvement in environmental performance.

Press Release

Note on Green Star

The Green Star environmental rating system for buildings was launched in 2003. Green Star covers a number of categories that assess the environmental impact that is a direct consequence of a project's site selection, design, construction and maintenance. The nine categories included within all Green Star rating tools are Management, Indoor Environment Quality, Energy, Transport, Water, Materials, Land Use & Ecology, Emissions and Innovation. The Timber credit, which projects can choose to document to contribute towards a Green Star rating, is from the Materials category.

There are Green Star rating tools for different building types including offices, retail centres, healthcare, education, industrial and multi-unit residential. Over 200 projects around Australia have Green Star ratings with a further 460 registered to achieve a Green Star rating. New Zealand and South Africa Green Building Councils have licensed Green Star for use in their own countries.

Many projects have achieved the Green Star Timber credit over the past six years using Australian timber. These include the Melbourne Convention Centre (Six Star Green Star) and Lend Lease's The Gauge in Melbourne (Six Star Green Star). As a voluntary rating tool, Green Star also provides the flexibility for projects to achieve a Green Star certified rating without points from the Timber credit.

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